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A LITTLE EXPERIMENT IN FLOWER-MAKING.

By GRACE MEEKER, Ottawa.

THE little experiment in new flower-making which it is my pleasure to present to you was undertaken by Mrs. Orpha Kious Davis. In the spring of 1901, she sent to Winnipeg, Manitoba, for a chrysanthemum that bloomed early enough to escape the frosts of that northern climate. I cannot give the name of the variety which has this merit, but it is certainly a yellow-flowering one.

Having obtained the chrysanthemum, she planted with it plants of the common wild sunflower, in the hope of obtaining a cross between the two. Her method of effecting the exchange of pollen was simple—she brushed the faces of the flowers together in the morning “while the dew was on.” The sunflowers fruited well, as is their wont, and the second season (1902) she planted seed from those plants again with the chrysanthemums. The flowers of the sunflower showed a few ligulate corollas in the disk and were misshaped and ugly. During this season she again brushed the faces together and saved the seed for planting.

In 1903 the results were much better; the flowers were quite double; that is, many of the tubular flowers of the disk were replaced by the ligulate corollas of the chrysanthemum, but the flowers were small.

During 1904 Doctor and Mrs. Davis were at the exposition in St. Louis, and nothing was done with the new flower. However, an incident occurred of sufficient value to record. A friend of Mrs. Davis from Bucyrus, Ohio, received three seeds of the flower which Doctor Davis happened to have in his pocket. After her return home, that is, this season, she planted the seeds and got excellent results. Unfortunately her letter telling of her success has been destroyed.

This season (1905) seeds were planted by Mrs. Davis in her flower-garden in Ottawa, and the results were wonderful.

The plant grows about five and one-half feet high—not nearly so tall as the sunflower. It branches near the ground; the branches well filled with flowers. The stalks are thick at the base—two inches a fair average. The leaves retain the sunflower shape, being only less coarse and stiff. The flowers this year were very perfect; the first ones large, some of them four inches across. The

involucre and row of rays of the sunflower are retained, even to the paler yellow of the rays. They are, however, longer and narrower. The disk has now become full of ligulate flowers of a bright golden yellow. While seed was formed this season, it was not so abundant as in former years.

It was Mrs. Davis's plan to experiment another year before she offered descriptions of her new flower, which she called a chrysanthemum-sunflower, for publication. The flowers attracted so much attention that one of the Ottawa papers printed an account; then she generously offered seed to all who cared to grow the flower.

In August Mrs. Davis died, and I am indebted to her husband, Dr. Geo. W. Davis, of Ottawa, for the facts here recorded. While not making any pretensions to scientific skill or attainments, Mrs. Davis was an ardent lover of nature, especially flowers, and had several experiments under way similar to this one.

The first flowers were grown at Princeton, Kan., and these most perfect ones at Ottawa.